

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 292966 TOSEC 310393

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SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT WALL STREET JOURNAL EDITORIAL
WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 1 HEADED "REFUGEES AND POLITICAL
PRISONERS."

2. NO YEAR IS EVER VERY GOOD FOR REFUGEES OR POLITICAL
PRISONERS, BUT THINGS HAVE RARELY BEEN AS BAD AS THIS YEAR.
THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES RECENTLY CHARGED
GOVERNMENTS WITH PAYING LITTLE HEED TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS
PACT ADOPTED IN 1961. IN A RECENT ADDRESS TO THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY HE CITED THE KILLING OF 675 BLACK RHODESIANS AT
A REFUGEE CAMP IN MOZAMBIQUE LAST SUMMER, REFUGEES TAKEN
AWAY FROM FAMILIES AT GUNPOINT IN LATIN AMERICA, DENIAL
OF AID TO VIETNAMESE FLEEING IN LEAKY BOATS AND THE FORCED
REPATRIATION OF A SOVIET DEFECTOR BY IRAN. A FEW DAYS
AFTER HIS ADDRESS, THE THAI GOVERNMENT HANDED OVER 26
SOBBING CAMBODIAN REFUGEES TO THE GOVERNMENT FROM WHICH
THEY FLED MORE THAN A MONTH PREVIOUSLY.

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PAGE 02 STATE 292966 TOSEC 310393

3. THUS IT WOULD SEEM THAT HUMANITARIAN APPEALS AND PUBLIC

OUTCRY HAVE LITTLE OR NO EFFECT. YET OCCASIONALLY THEY DO WORK, AND A CASE IN POINT IS CHILE'S RECENT DECISION TO -- " -- , T 20 POLITICAL PRISONERS HELD UNDER THREE-YEAR OLD STATE OF SIEGE LAWS.

4. THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION CONDEMNED THE REGIME'S VIOLATION OF HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS, SO DID THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES, SO DID VARIOUS CHURCH GROUPS. BUT PROBABLY THE MOST PERSUASIVE PRESSURES WERE THOSE APPLIED BY THE U.S. DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS. LAST JUNE, AFTER TREASURY SECRETARY WILLIAM SIMON WARNED DURING A VISIT TO SANTIAGO THAT CLOSER ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES DEPENDED ON PROGRESS TOWARD ENSURING HUMAN RIGHTS, THE REGIME RELEASED 350 PRISONERS. AFTER SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER REPEATED THE WARNING, IT RELEASED ANOTHER 60.

5. THIS NEW POLICY STILL DOES NOT ANSWER THE QUESTION OF WHAT HAPPENED TO SEVERAL HUNDRED PERSONS THE CHILEAN CATHOLIC CHURCH SAYS REMAIN UNACCOUNTED FOR. NOR DOES IT NECESSARILY MEAN THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT WILL END ALL REPRESSIVE MEASURES. STILL, THE RELEASE HOLDS OUT HOPE THAT THE REGIME WILL CURTAIL THOSE PRACTICES THAT HAVE EARNED IT WORLD-WIDE CONDEMNATION, AND IT COULD SERVE AS AN EXAMPLE TO THOSE NATIONS THAT REMAIN UNRESPONSIVE.

6. YET AS BLIND AS THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN ABOUT INTERNATIONAL REACTION TO ITS PRACTICES, IT DID SCORE AN EFFECTIVE PROPAGANDA COUP: IT OFFERED TO EXCHANGE TWO JAILED COMMUNISTS FOR SOVIET BIOLOGIST VLADIMIR BUKOVSKY, WHO IS SERVING SEVEN YEARS FOR "SLANDERING" SOVIET RUSSIA, AND HUBERT MATOS, A FORMER OFFICIAL WHO HAS BEEN A POLITICAL PRISONER IN CUBA FOR MORE THAN 15 YEARS.

7. WHATEVER ELSE MAY BE SAID ABOUT THIS OFFER, IT VERY NEATLY DRAMATIZES THE SORT OF MORAL SELECTIVITY OF THOSE WHO ARE EAGER TO CONDEMN CHILE WHILE REFUSING TO CONDEMN REPRESSIVE LEFTIST GOVERNMENTS. INDEED, SOME U.S. CONGRESSMEN WHO LED THE RECENT FIGHT TO BAR FUTURE MILITARY SALES TO CHILE AND TO DRASTICALLY CURTAIL ECONOMIC AID ARE UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 STATE 292966 TOSEC 310393

AMONG THE MOST VOCAL ADVOCATES OF PROVIDING AID AND SUPPORT TO REPRESSIVE AFRICAN REGIMES AND OF BROADENING CONTACTS WITH CUBA AND THE DICTATORSHIPS OF EASTERN EUROPE. SOME OF THEM HAVE CRITICIZED THE ADMINISTRATION FOR REFUSING ECONOMIC AID TO VIETNAM, A GOVERNMENT NOT EXACTLY KNOWN FOR HUMANITARIANISM.

8. THIS DOUBLE STANDARD IS NOTHING NEW, OF COURSE. BUT

THE REAL ISSUE IS NOT IDEOLOGY BUT HUMAN RIGHTS, SINCE
TORTURE AND REPRESSION ARE ALWAYS MORALLY INDEFENSIBLE.
THAT'S WHY THE CHILEAN DECISION REPRESENTS A NET GAIN IN
WHAT RECENTLY HAS BEEN A LOSING WORLD-WIDE STRUGGLE TO
PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS. (END TEXT.) ROBINSON

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